



SCIENCE, THEOLOGY AND PANDEMIC:
SOME CONSIDERATIONS IN DIALOGUE WITH PAUL TILICH
AND MARTIN HEIDEGGER

CIÊNCIA, TEOLOGIA E PANDEMIA:
ALGUMAS CONSIDERAÇÕES EM DIÁLOGO COM
PAUL TILICH E MARTIN HEIDEGGER

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ABSTRACT

This research seeks to analyze the situation of the pandemic in the contemporary scenario, considering the perspective of science and theology on this fact. The pandemic raises a number of questions. Especially, existential questions arise as well as theodicies. The memory of the origin of evil is present, but, on the other hand, hope emerges in the midst of the crisis. What should Christian theology accomplish in the face of the pandemic situation? This is one of the questions that this research proposes to reflect. Therefore, it seeks to highlight the role of modern science and theology in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic in the technological era. It will, therefore, seek to dialogue with theology, philosophy and some scientific considerations to reflect on the situation of the pandemic and human existence in the face of it. Thus, this research follows a dialogical hermeneutic method and a methodology of bibliographic research for thematic analysis, considering, especially, the dialogue¹ with the theologian of culture Paul Tillich and with the philosopher of “Being” Martin Heidegger.

Keywords: Science; Theology; Pandemic; Tillich; Heidegger.

RESUMO

Esta pesquisa busca abordar a situação da pandemia no cenário contemporâneo, considerando a perspectiva da ciência e da teologia sobre este fato. A pandemia suscita uma série de questionamentos. Especialmente, surgem questões existenciais e também teodicéias. A memória da origem do mal é presente, mas, por outro lado, a esperança emerge em meio à crise. O que a teologia cristã deve realizar em face da situação da pandemia? Essa é uma das questões que essa pesquisa se propõe a refletir. Portanto, busca-se destacar o papel da ciência moderna e da teologia diante da pandemia da COVID-19 na era tecnológica. Se buscará, portanto, dialogar com a teologia, a filosofia e algumas considerações científicas para se refletir sobre a situação da pandemia e a existência humana em face dela. Dessa forma, esta pesquisa segue um método hermenêutico dialógico e uma metodologia da pesquisa bibliográfica para a análise temática, considerando, especialmente, o diálogo com o teólogo da cultura Paul Tillich e com o filósofo do “Ser” Martin Heidegger.

Palavras-chave: Ciência; Teologia; Pandemia; Tillich; Heidegger.

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INTRODUCTION

This research seeks to present a theological and philosophical reflection on the question of existence and the pandemic, understanding theology as a science and seeking to highlight its role in the face of reality. Some thinkers are presented to highlight the role of theology and some definitions of theology, highlighting a theology as a theology of the cross. Such theology looks to the suffering Christ and finds strength and consolation in the Gospel of Christ to go beyond the suffering and evil present in the world.

This article also presents a Christian theological perspective based on Christian tradition. As can also be seen in the final considerations. Some characteristics of the doctrine of creation and the doctrine of original sin stand out according to the systematic theological perspective and Christian tradition.

In this context, some examples of theology were highlighted in which it sought to exercise its apologetic function in the face of the situation and moments of serious crisis in history. The situation was even demonstrated in the works of art. Thus, theology needs to respond to the situation, respond with the word of God, which is the word of truth, the word of consolation, hope, courage and strength. That is why a theology of the pandemic is also a theology of the courage to be, because it calls on existence to move forward, towards the final realization of the kingdom of God. In this sense, theology points out to the coming of Christ.

The methodology used in this research is bibliographic and dialogic. It sought to present some theologians and philosophers who reflect on the question of existence, the problem of evil and the role of humanity in the face of evil and suffering. In this context, in the topic of existentialism and the pandemic, it sought to, specifically, present some characteristics of the thinking of Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and Heidegger about existence and meaning in the face of reality. Therefore, the objective of this research was to highlight some characteristics of existence and the pandemic and the role of theology in the face of reality, emphasizing some characteristics of the thought of important thinkers, such as Tillich and Heidegger.

1 - Science, Theology and pandemic

Theology is a human science in a theoretical and practical sense. All science is born in the epistemological horizon seeking to raise questions, analyze and bring results. Therefore, theory and



praxis present a necessary interrelationship; they walk side by side. In the practical field, science through its investigative and interpretation methods reveals the results of its scientific research after a long period of analysis of nature (*Physis*)². The complex structure of nature requires the contemplation that causes astonishment and from the astonishment there is a need for reflection and theorization.

From the primeval thought of Greek antiquity, it can understand the Greek term “*physis*” as the totality of everything that is, of everything that exists. In this sense, in the context of the emergence of philosophy (4th century or 5th century BC) in Greek antiquity, the term “*physis*” revealed itself in all its dimensions. According to the thinker Bornheim: “for the pre-Socratics, right from the start, the concept of *physis* is the broadest and most radical possible, comprising in itself everything that exists” (2005, p.14, our translation). Since nature is all that exists, it can be said that Christian theology as a science is concerned with everything that exists and with everything that happens, since this is its mission: to reflect and present the Word of God in the face of the world.

But, “*physis*” in Greek antiquity was related to the gods themselves, since the gods were understood as part of nature. It can be highlighted: “To *physis* belong heaven and earth, stone and plant, animal and man, human events as the work of man and the gods, and, above all, the gods themselves belong to *physis*” (HEIDEGGER *apud* BORNHEIM, 2005, p.14, our translation). The “*physis*” is being itself and determines the totality of beings. It is from “*physis*” that it sought to build a cosmovision in the period of Greek antiquity. According to Bornheim: “[...] from *physis* one can then ignite an understanding of the totality of the real” (2005, p.14, our translation).

Jaeger in his work “The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers” emphasizes the meaning of nature related to the divine: “But the word also encompasses the original source of things, that from which they develop and through which their development constantly resounds” (JAEGER *apud* BORNHEIM, 2005, p.11, our translation).

Noting Jaeger's understanding about the relation between the nature and the divine in early Greek thinkers, it is important to highlight:

An established confession of faith never played any part in the veneration accorded to the deities of the Greek cults. Their significance and their nature fluctuated with the universal

² The Greek term “*physis*” with origin in Greek antiquity, especially, standing out in pre-Socratic philosophy is related to the presentification of being. This Greek term when translated into Latin “*natura*” underwent several transformations of meaning. It has lost its original meaning from Greek antiquity, according to the German philosopher Martin Heidegger. In this sense, it is important to note that the Greek term “*physis*” can have several meanings. Therefore, this research will indicate some meanings.



change; and as life and human experience advanced from one stage to another, there were always new ways of discovering the divine presence in reality. (JAEGER, 1936, p.91).

Thinking on the concept of nature in the early Greek thinkers, Jaeger highlights: “In Anaximander it was the concept of a dike or tisis ruling the process of coming-to-be and passingaway which made the physis a true cosmos (i.e. a legal order)”. (JAEGER, 1936, p.139). It can be noted that the concept of nature in Greek antiquity has a relation with the very existence and the reality. In this sense, analyzing the world, contemplating the nature, feeling the amazement in face of the nature, cosmovisions were created by the humanity. Thus, reflecting on the dimension of theology as a science, it should be noted that it is concerned with “physis”, conceiving it as everything that happens, that is created by God.

The understanding of theology as a science that deals with the understanding of things comes from the period of Greek antiquity. The philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC) introduced the term “theology” in his work “Metaphysics”³ with the following meaning: theology is metaphysics; theology can be defined as “first principles science” or “first philosophy”. It comprises the three theoretical sciences: theology, mathematics and physics. Theology, is therefore, the most important of the three theoretical sciences.

According to Zilles:

Aristotle cites theological philosophy as the first philosophy, among the three theoretical sciences, alongside mathematics and physics. According to him, it deals with the first cause, the immobile engine that moves everything without being moved, and the non-empirical first principles of being and thought. (ZILLES, 2013, p.107-108, our translation).

Knowledge is born out of amazement in the face of “physis”. But, there is beyond “physis” what has always awakened in human beings the transcendental amazement. It is a question of amazement in the face of the totally other (*absconditus*⁴). Metaphysical amazement gives rise to a special kind of human science. That human science that is concerned with learning about the transcendent or the divine. And it is in this terrain that philosophy is found, but above all, theology. It is a science that was born out of amazement in the face of the totally other. Aristotle calls it the first science. Myths were the occupation of this first science, but myths in that context were

³ Metaphysics I, 983b 29. In Metaphysics V, 1026 to 19 and X, 1064b 3.

⁴ Rudolf Otto in his “Das Heilige” (The sacred) presents the notion of God as the totally other, the “absconditus”, transcendent or “numinous”. For Otto, “numinous” is “Mysterium”: wholly Other, totally other. It is “tremendum” as well, which means totally powerful. OTTO, Rudolf. The Idea of the Holy. Trans. John W. Harvey. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950.



animus, life and reality itself were determined by mythology and its cosmogonies. Theology as a first science is related to the meaning of the Greek term *arche* (principle, origin). In this way, it can be said that theology announces the origin or the beginning of everything that happens.

Over time, theology stands out as monotheistic as can be seen in the Holy Scriptures, especially, in Genesis and/or Job. However, with the call of Abraham the Hebrew people were born, thus, it can be observed the emergence of a Jewish science. Jewish theology is present in history. It becomes a landmark for theology and future Christian theology. The written “Torah” imposes itself through Moses and through the entire Jewish people on their journey. In this sense, the essence of this theology is understood: Jewish theology is eschatological, but, it is also a theology of messianic hope. There is hope for perpetual and world peace.

Later, in the “incarnate logos” (as can be seen in the Gospel according to John, chapter 1) it sees the emergence of Christian theology. Christian theology is not born with John, but with Jesus himself, the Christ. It is Christian theology, for it is messianic theology, the theology of Christ (of the Messiah). Therefore, it is the fulfillment of the messianic eschatological hope in Christ.

Christian theology is the theology of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God announced in the life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Therefore, theology points beyond (*meta*) nature (*physis*) and earth, points to the *eschaton* (to the last things), to the final realization of the Kingdom of God and the glorification of God. In Christ, theology as a science was demonstrated in all wisdom and full wisdom, since Jesus is the full hermeneutic and the full prophet and in him the Word of God is fulfilled, because he is the Word (*logos*). Before being baptized, Jesus already presented all the knowledge and knowledge teaching in the synagogues, as highlighted in Luke 2. 41-52:

41 Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. 43 After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. 44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.” 49 “Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?”[a] 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them. 51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother



treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.⁵

Therefore, it is understood that He is the true theologian who speaks of Himself, for He is God. His theology of the kingdom of God is self-fulfilling. It is theology that announces the Gospel message of the kingdom of God, the victory over the double death: physical and spiritual, the resurrection and the guarantee of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ as the only and sufficient savior and obedience to his Word. Theology is full in Christ, in us humans it is limited, just as all knowledge in humanity is limited.

In God there is full theology. As a science, theology needs to raise questions to understand reality and human existence. In moments of crisis, such as the situation of the pandemic that has been highlighted on the world stage since 2019, theology must play its role in the imminence of human desperation. This is why theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer emphasizes that theology is a theology of discipleship. It stands in the face of danger and in the midst of danger in order to proclaim the message of the cross. According to Bonhoeffer: the disciple is a disciple only in suffering and rejection. Discipleship requires, above all, love for God, who denies itself, takes up its cross. In this sense, discipleship is demonstrated in communion with the person of Jesus Christ. The disciple submits itself to the law of Christ, that is, it submits itself to the cross. This demonstrates the decision to be a disciple. The discipleship of the cross expresses selflessness. It emphasizes seeing only Christ who is in front of it, who guides it. Discipleship of the cross takes up its cross and walks with Christ. Self-denial for the love of Christ is part of the essence of the disciple of Christ.

The cross is necessary suffering. It is a suffering proper to being a Christian. In this sense, a Christianity without discipleship of the cross is not Christianity in its essence. Without discipleship Christianity is restricted to cheap grace and not to the gospel of Christ which has precious grace. Cheap grace does not differentiate Christian from worldly existence and does not understand that the Christian is a disciple who must deny itself for the love of Christ and take up its cross. Cheap grace sees discipleship of the cross as anguish. The fundamental characteristic of the suffering of the cross is being rejected, despised by human beings in suffering, but not despised by Christ. The

⁵ BIBLE. Available on: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%20%3A41-52&version=NIV> Access: 06/25/2022.



cross is, thus, understood as compassion with Christ, suffering with Christ. Beyond that, it can highlight those have cheap grace do not understand and accept that Christian can suffer.

The first suffering is the break with this world by embracing the calling. It is being born again with Christ. Thus, it is the death of the old human being by accepting Jesus Christ as the only and sufficient savior. Discipleship highlights the calling in the life of the Christian. Thus, discipleship is not cheap grace. The very meaning of the church is defined from Christ, the suffering Christ. The church must demonstrate the discipleship of the cross. Carrying the cross is maintaining communion with Jesus Christ. It is important to emphasize that the yoke is easy and the burden is light because of Christ's love. Having communion with Christ is expressed, therefore, in the greatest joy, for the Christian has found Jesus Christ.

For Bonhoeffer:

The passion of Christ is the victory of divine love over the powers of evil, and therefore it is the only supportable basis for Christian obedience. Once again, Jesus calls those who follow him to share his passion. How can we convince the world by our preaching of the passion when we shrink from that passion in our own lives? On the cross Jesus fulfilled the law he himself established and thus graciously keeps his disciples in the fellowship of his suffering. The cross is the only power in the world which proves that suffering love can avenge and vanquish evil. But it was just this participation in the cross which the disciples were granted when Jesus called them to him. They are called blessed because of their visible participation in his cross. (BONHOEFFER, 1963, p.161).

Theology responds in the face of war situations, it is not restricted to the ecclesiastical space, but has the duty to be on the front line of the battle and to question and respond, as well as to act. There is no theology without "praxis". Then, theology is ethics. If it is silent in the face of a crisis, it is not responding to the ethical call of Christ, the Lord of the Sabbath, the God of miracles and prodigious healings. From of, it can be said: theology of the pandemic is a theology of hope and a theology of cross.

A definition of theology is then recorded here: theology is missionary, it is public and not merely private. It stands to debate the fundamental questions of life, death, the afterlife and does not hide in classes, in buildings and nobility. Theology is for each and every Christian, because it is to announce the revelation and the Word of God in history, which, being action and missionary, has the dialogic duty to understand the different cosmovisions and the sufferings of the world. Therefore, theology must announce the remedy for the sick world, because, as the patristic



theologian Augustine of Hippo⁶ said, the world is sick, all humanity is subject to infirmities, because, due to original sin, double death entered reality: physical death and spiritual death.

Augustine develops the doctrine of original sin in an inaugural way, refuting the thought of Pelagius. He addresses that the human being decided to sin, because it has free will. Thus, the human being decided to disobey God's command and because of that, it lost the maintenance of immortality and all the privileges of the Garden of Eden. Diseases did not exist in the Garden of Eden, but due to original sin, they entered the world, just like death. All creation, since then, groans. Everything was affected and the “*imago Dei*” was corrupted, just as free will was corrupted. It is worth mentioning that free will is understood as will in Augustine.

McGrath (2005) highlights that Augustine introduces the analogy of the balance to explain that the will or free will is now leaning more towards evil than towards good. Because the world is sick and heading towards death and end, Augustine defines the church as a great hospital in which saints and sinners are and how the sick must receive the word of healing. There is only reconciliation between man and God through Jesus Christ.

For the human being to enjoy the communion and salvation of Christ, it needs to accept Jesus as Savior, as Christ, and, thus, it will become part of the new creation and will have eternal life, if it remains in Him. In this way, it is observed that the truth is in the world. The truth is God Itself. All other sciences show evidence of the truth, which comes from God. Considering that according to Augustine the human being cannot create the truth, because it belongs to God, the human being only verifies it.

Due to original sin, there are several possibilities of errors and diseases, because sin caused an imbalance in nature, in the biomes and in all the species that suffer. The authority that the human being had over the animals, as their guardian, was also corrupted. Thus, according to Christian theology, the origin of diseases, epidemics and pandemics stands out. This understanding belongs to the Christian worldview. The fact is that the entire system of nature is heading towards the end and or certain mutation.

The human being, being a being of decision and freedom (because it has free will) was the only being created in the image and likeness of the Triune God. Being a special, privileged being, guardian of the truth and gardener of creation, it had pure knowledge and full communion with God, but it decided to use its freedom for the possibility of disobeying and disagreeing with God,

⁶ About the scientific status of theology, Augustine also considered it an academic discipline.



when it took from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. From this, the human being becomes aware of the possibility of practicing possibilities of error and actions that displease God.

The knowledge of evil originates in original sin and inaugurates the practice of evil in the world. Since then, the human being is a being of crisis, that is, fallen from its original state created by God. The flowering of evil was established from the decision to experience it. With this, two questions arise in the face of the pandemic situation: the question of sin and the question of evil. Both of them entered the world because of “Adam”.

The problem of evil is always revisited in times of crisis and wars, since tragedies, injustices and death are incomprehensible to many persons. Thus, the Prussian thinker, Kant, emphasizes in the context of the 18th century, the same century in which modern naturalism emerges, the question of evil. Kant, specifically, in his work “Religion within the boundary of pure reason” (1793) argues that the human being presents evil in itself. The radicalization of evil points to the meaning of evil as inherent to the human being. Humanity welcomes evil as a vice due to passions.

Radical evil is in human nature. There is evil and good in human nature. In Kant's words:

That the world is in evil is a complaint as old as history, and even as poetic art, even older, yes, just as old as the oldest of all poetry, priestly religion. However, everyone makes the world begin for good: with the Golden Age, with life in paradise, or with an even more fortunate life, in community with celestial beings (KANT, 2008, p.22, our translation).

The world being in evil is an ontological problem that concerns the human being. The question of the evil inherent in the human being for Kant is an *a priori* not an *a posteriori*. What is this nature of human being? For Kant: “by the nature of man, we will understand here only the subjective ground of the use of his freedom in general (under objective moral laws), which precedes every fact that presents itself to the senses, wherever such ground resides” (KANT, 2008, p. 24, our translation).

What is the origin of the evil? In Kant there is an important question: “namely, could man, of his kind, be neither good nor bad, or, at best, both the one and the other, partly good and partly bad? (KANT, 2008, p.23, our translation). Man is evil by nature. In this context, Kant presents Jesus as the one who performs the ontic-ontological overcoming in the face of evil. Jesus opens the door to the dominion of good, so that those who against its will were subject to the evil principle may now be under a new dominion. It overcomes, therefore, the struggle of both principles with



each other: the good principle and the bad principle. According to Kant, Jesus is the representation of the principle of good, but evil is still in the world, until a new epoch arises in which evil will have a definitive end.

In Kant's words:

Therefore, the moral result of such a struggle on the part of the hero of this story (until its death) is not, strictly speaking, the defeat of the evil principle; for its kingdom still persists, and in any case a new epoch will still take place when it must be destroyed - but only a rupture of its power, so as not to hold against its will those who for so long they were subject, because another moral domain was opened to them (since man must be under one) as a free place where they can find protection for their morality, if they intend to abandon the old domain. Furthermore, the evil principle continues to call itself the prince of this world [...] (2008, p.95).

Jesus Christ is the hero of the history. The action of Jesus even transposes history. Evil enters the world due to an imposture of the human being. Every human being from Adam onwards presents a depravity that dwells in itself as a possibility in the structure of the human being. This depravity can only be overcome through the idea of moral good in all its purity. For Kant:

an imposture (*fausseté*) (satanic cunning, by which evil came into the world); a depravity that dwells in all men and by nothing can be overcome except by the idea of the moral good in all its purity, with the awareness that it actually belongs to our original disposition, and it is only important to take care to keep it free from all the impure mixture and welcome it deeply into our intention so that, through the effect it has on our minds little by little, we can convince ourselves that the feared powers of evil can do nothing against it ("the gates of hell do not prevail over it"), and that, in order not to superstitiously make up for the lack of this trust, thanks to expiations that do not presuppose any change of intention, or fanatically, by means of supposed interior illuminations (merely passive), and thus always keep away from the well-founded in self-activity, we should not attribute to such trust any other characteristic than that of a well-guided conduct of life. (2008, p.96).

Keeping good is a duty, it is beyond the law. This highlights that duty emanates from the intention of the heart (moral intention), from something pure. Christianity based on Jesus Christ founds a moral religion, which establishes the original duty to live the good and to decide for the good. This is taught by reason and inscribed in the human heart. The evil in the Kantian understanding is to be in opposition to the moral law and the pure act. The moral law is based on the action of good through pure intention.

The question of the pandemic makes us reflect on the origin of evil. In Kant stands out the origin of evil in relation to morality. However, in the Christian theological perspective, the problem of evil arises from Adam's decision to disobey God's command. Through Adam's sin evil and disease enter the world. Beyond that, the question of the pandemic is an ontological question in



addition to the biological question. Since existence is affected through the existential crises that the world scenario of the pandemic caused. It is noteworthy that panic syndrome, anxiety, and other ailments increased during this period, also due to worldwide unemployment issues. The pandemic crisis is also an economic crisis.

Paul Tillich highlights in his “Systematic Theology” about the function of theology in the face reality. In view of this, the question is: what would be the function of theology? In this research, it is important to ask: **what is the role of theology in the face of evil, tragedy, suffering and the pandemic?**

Theology has a duty to respond to reality. It has a duty **to be on the front line and to announce the Word of God** in the face of the pandemic, suffering and evil. The Word of God that frees, that consoles, that gives strength and hope to continue. For Tillich, the function of theology is to respond to the situation. Therefore, theology can be defined as kairoitic. Such kairoitic theology faces the historical and cultural situation of its time. It must answer the fundamental questions of its time. Because, there is no theology without being a theology that seeks to reach lives (existences). Tillich develops the correlation method as the basis of his theology. The correlation method seeks to correlate theology with the situation. This is the necessary apologetic character of theology.

Theology necessarily dialogues with hermeneutics to understand the situation and the “kairos” of its time. In this sense, the hermeneutical method of correlation is the backbone of the theological system, for Paul Tillich. According to the theologian:

The structure of the theological system is determined by the method of correlation. This method requires that each part of the system includes a section in which the question is developed through an analysis of human existence and existence in general, and a section in which the theological answer is given based on the sources, environment and norm of theology systematic. (TILLICH, 2005, p.80, our translation).

Because it is a theology that is concerned with the situation, theology in Tillich is existential and, so to speak, ontological. Tillich presents the relationship between existence and the Christian message in his theology. Its theological-hermeneutic analysis takes place through the method of correlation. Since, it is the method “par excellence” to understand the essential nature of the human being. Nature is constituted at its core by contradiction. From existence and finitude, Tillich seeks to think about being and God. The complex and dynamic unity of life presents the participation in the being, highlighting its correlational structure, both essential and existential. In Tillich's words:



“theology is above all a doctrine about God” (2005, p.81). Every theologian is questioned about the reason and the revelation of the dynamics of faith, therefore, the work “Systematic Theology” begins with an epistemological and ontological aspect. Reason is transcended by Reason which is God. Thus, the first source of Theology is the revelation presented in the Holy Scriptures and in reality in general.

In this perspective, Tillich begins his work “Systematic Theology” addressing revelation, that is, the self-manifestation of the divine mystery. In the face of revelation, according to Tillich, philosophy establishes the question of being, as well as of what being is constituted. It seeks to present the answers from an ontological path. Since reality participates in being, the analysis of the structure of being is fundamental to understand life. Tillich prefers to use the term “ontology” rather than “metaphysics”. For, metaphysics has undergone semantic transformations over time that have changed the heart of its question.

Thinking about the task of philosophy in history, Tillich presents the dimension of philosophy as ontological in its essence and, in this sense, philosophy seeks to establish the question about all reality as a whole. Then, the task of philosophy, so to speak, is also to ask about the situation of the pandemic. According to theologian Tillich: “Philosophy raises the question of reality as a whole; it asks about the structure of being. And it answers in terms of categories, structural laws and universal concepts. It must respond in ontological terms”. (TILLICH, 2005, p.37, our translation).

Philosophy must seek to answer the situation of the pandemic ontologically. Similarly, theology too. However, theology goes beyond philosophy as it is apologetic, kairotic and eschatological in its essence. In this sense, in his work “Systematic Theology”, Tillich highlights the interface between philosophy and theology. What do both have in common? They are ontological and respond with ontological terms. The origin of philosophy is to ask about the structure of being and theology raises the same question as philosophy. In Tillich's words: “Theology necessarily raises the same question” (2005, p.37, our translation). Theology refers to what ultimately concerns existence, this belongs to being.

Considering the scenario, theology needs to be carried out within the horizon of the “courage of being”. In periods of great anxiety in human history, such as the Middle Ages, it can be highlighted that the period of the Covid-19 pandemic in the 21st century is also one of the great



periods of anxiety. Observing some works of art by the painter Hieronymus Bosch (1450-1516) from the end of the medieval era, a figure about the work of art “The hay wagon”⁷ (1510-1516) which depicts the period of Middle Ages, noticing people in suffering fighting because of food.

Figure 1: The hay wagon



Source: https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/O_carro_de_feno#/media/Ficheiro:The_Hay_Wain_by_Hieronymus_Bosch.jpg

From Tillich and his work “The courage to be” it can understand the period of the Middle Ages, which lasted approximately from the 6th to the 15th century, as one of the great periods of anxiety in the history of mankind. What is anxiety? According to psychology, anxiety is a disease that affects existence, having a gradual content in the spheres of the “psyche” and the physical-chemical composition of the human body. Human anxiety and desperation are intertwined, not in a cause-and-effect sense, but walking side by side. Anxiety is therefore defined as a disorder. Fear “is the assessment of danger; anxiety is the unpleasant feeling state evoked when fear is stimulated” (BECK et al., 1985, p.9 apud CLARK, 2012, p.17, our translation). Anxiety is subjective. The Brazilian thinker Augusto Cury defines anxiety as one of the evils of the century. Anxiety is one level of Accelerated Thought Syndrome (SPA). For Cury⁸:

⁷ Hieronymus Bosch or workshop - Anthony Bond [et al.] (2005) Self portrait. Renaissance to contemporary, London: National Portrait Gallery, ISBN 978-1855143579, fig. 44. Available: https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/O_carro_de_feno#/media/Ficheiro:The_Hay_Wain_by_Hieronymus_Bosch.jpg Access in: 06/25/2022.

⁸ Cury: “De acordo com a Organização Mundial da Saúde (OMS), 1,4 bilhão de pessoas, cedo ou tarde, desenvolverão o último estágio da dor humana, o que corresponde a 20% da população do planeta. Mas, como veremos, a Síndrome do Pensamento



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 1.4 billion people, sooner or later, will develop the last stage of human pain, which corresponds to 20% of the planet's population⁹. But, as we shall see, the Accelerated Thinking Syndrome (SPA) probably affects more than 80% of individuals of all ages, from students to professors, from intellectuals to illiterates, from doctors to patients. (CURY, 2013, p.9, our translation).

It understands anxiety as a condition of the “psyche” in which the human being is taken by the state of concern, due to the feeling of impotence in the face of reality or circumstances of reality. Anxiety is the greatest evil of modern society, a society of the technological age. According to Cury¹⁰, after holding a conference, he was invited by a school owner to visit the institution.

I had twenty minutes. Seeing his enormous interest, I complied with the request. How not I just wanted to make a formal visit, but make a contribution, I asked him to choose a few classes of students, to whom I would speak briefly about certain complex functions of intelligence, on the Self as manager of the psyche and about how Accelerated Thinking Syndrome compromises performance intellect overall. (CURY, 2013, p.10, our translation).

Cury highlighting that anxiety is the evil of the century, calls on schools, educators and society to encourage and give the necessary support so that the children of humanity have a free mind and healthy emotions. It is necessary for the self to know how to manage emotions and to know how to deal with the possible adversities of life.

Cury highlights¹¹:

I stopped, looked at the teachers, and asked, “What are we doing with the teachers? children of humanity?”. I didn't hold back. I said that although the teachers to be the most important professionals in society, the educational system classic is sick, forming sick people for a stressful society, because it takes students, from preschool to graduate school, to know millions of data about the world we are in, but almost nothing about the world we are, the psychic planet. Classical education very rarely teaches students the tools so that they learn, from an early age, the ability to filter stressful stimuli, protecting emotion, managing your thoughts, thinking before reacting, to be resilient and, in this way, to support the Self as a psychic manager and alleviate, at least a little, the severe symptoms of Thought Syndrome Accelerated. (CURY, 2013, p.11, our translation).

Acelerado (SPA) provavelmente atinge mais de 80% dos indivíduos de todas as idades, de alunos a professores, de intelectuais a iletrados, de médicos a pacientes”. (CURY, 2013, p.9).

⁹ Cury is talking about the depression.

¹⁰ “[...] Eu tinha vinte minutos. Vendo seu enorme interesse, atendi ao pedido. Como não queria só fazer uma visita formal, mas dar uma contribuição, solicitei que escolhesse algumas classes de alunos, para os quais eu falaria brevemente sobre certas funções complexas da inteligência, sobre o Eu como gestor da psique e sobre como a Síndrome do Pensamento Acelerado compromete o desempenho global do intelecto”. (CURY, 2013, p.10).

¹¹ “Eu parei, olhei para os professores e perguntei: “O que estamos fazendo com os filhos da humanidade?”. Não me contive. Afirmei que, apesar de os professores serem os profissionais mais importantes da sociedade, o sistema educacional clássico está doente, formando pessoas doentes para uma sociedade estressante, pois leva os alunos, da pré-escola à pós-graduação, a conhecer milhões de dados sobre o mundo em que estamos, mas quase nada sobre o mundo que somos, o planeta psíquico. A educação clássica muito raramente ensina aos estudantes as ferramentas básicas para que aprendam, desde a mais tenra infância, a habilidade de filtrar estímulos estressantes, proteger a emoção, gerenciar seus pensamentos, pensar antes de reagir, ser resiliente e, desse modo, aliviar o Eu como gestor psíquico e aliviar, pelo menos um pouco, os graves sintomas da Síndrome do Pensamento Acelerado”. (CURY, 2013, p.3).



There is a time when anxiety reaching its peak in the human being's experience can make it no longer able to distinguish between what is real and what is imagination. It is being filled with the fear of evil or the impending possibility of evil. Accompanied by anxiety is desperation, which are interrelated. The human being, in many moments, cannot control anxiety, because its action in the face of anxiety is reactive, given that the origin of anxiety occurs through external circumstances. It shows itself as an excess of insecurity, but, much more than that, it is an excess of feelings of impotence.

As Tillich defines there are three types of anxiety, which can be analyzed through the history of Western civilization. For Tillich, “[...] at the end of ancient civilization ontic anxiety is predominant, at the end of the Middle Ages moral anxiety, and at the end of the modern period spiritual anxiety” (TILLICH, 1952, p.57). Even if one type of anxiety predominates at some point in history, the other types of anxiety are still present and highlight their effectiveness. Tillich diagnoses the history of humanity from the problem of anxiety in his work “The courage to be”. However, the origin of this diagnosis and the symptoms need to be analyzed, at least, if indicating some characteristics.

In the Middle Ages, for example, a moral anxiety, an anxiety of guilt, was dominant. The feeling of guilt is present in the preaching of hell and purgatory in the Middle Ages and even in the modern period with the emergence of the Protestant Reformation that seeks to overcome these hermeneutical problems. It is noteworthy that in that scenario of the Middle Ages there was the emergence of universities, composed of courses in Theology, Law, Medicine, among other areas of knowledge. The presence of the church is also highlighted, helping to maintain the prevailing worldview: a theocentric worldview. In this horizon, it is noteworthy that there was the emergence of universities, great production of works of art, of theological writings, organization of great compendia of biblical hermeneutics and Christian theology, contributing to the systematic organization of theology.

In this sense, the theologian Saint Jerome, who prepared the Translation of the Bible into Latin, entitled “Vulgate” in the 5th century AD, was recognized in theological and Christian academic precincts, since the “Vulgate” was the edition of the Holy Bible used during the Middle Ages. It is also noteworthy that the leading patristic thinker Augustine of Hippo also continued to be regarded during the Middle Ages as an important Christian theologian and recognized as one of



the church fathers. His theological contributions, such as the doctrine of original sin, the doctrine of the church, the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of the sacraments, were considered by the church, including the interpretative glosses and textbooks of theology were based on the tradition of the church fathers, in addition to seeking to be based on the apostolic tradition.

The fact is that Augustine's work echoes throughout theology since the 4th century A.D., including the theology of the Protestant Reformation, with its reservations. However, although there was all this scientific and theological progress during the Middle Ages, this period was one of the most controversial periods in human history, fraught with crises, diseases, plagues, and social and economic problems. The Middle Ages is not the Dark Ages, but it is a long period that can be understood as a period of great ebullition, on the point of collapsing and exploding the Modern Age. Why is it a period of great ebullition? Due to the fact that there were several worldviews in great conflict in the context of the Middle Ages. Although the theocentric cosmovision was the predominant one, it is noteworthy that within this historical period a new cosmovision was gestating: the Renaissance cosmovision, but also an atheist scientific cosmovision and a reform cosmovision, which in that period was called the pre-reform worldview.

According to Tillich:

If one period deserves the name of the "age of anxiety" it is the pre-Reformation and Reformation. The anxiety of condemnation symbolized as the "wrath of God" and intensified by the imagery of hell and purgatory drove people of the late Middle Ages to various means of assuaging their anxiety: pilgrimages holy places, if possible to Rome; ascetic exercises, sometimes of an extreme character; devotion to relics, often brought together in mass collections; acceptance of ecclesiastical punishments and the desire for indulgences; exaggerated participation in masses and penance, increase in prayers and alms. In short they asked ceaselessly: How can I appease the wrath of God, how can I attain divine mercy, the forgiveness of sin? This predominant form of anxiety embraced the other two forms. (TILLICH, 1952, p.58-59).

The conflict of worldviews in the context of the Middle Ages in the light of Christian theology occurs because in this period the religious power would have placed the church's tradition above the Holy Scriptures (the main source of Christian theology). In placing the source of church tradition (including the church fathers' perspective) above Holy Scripture, there were several hermeneutical problems, such as: sacramental theology that places salvation through merits and works, the sale and purchase of indulgences, unless accessibility to the Holy Scriptures. The main hermeneutical problem is the soteriological perspective present in the Middle Ages, which poses the question of salvation, especially through works. Pieces of heaven were sold and even for people



who had already died, someone could buy them a piece of heaven and get them out of purgatory. The spiritual crisis was alarming in this period, then it is understood as one of the great periods of anxiety in history.

Still in the context of the Middle Ages, scholasticism (a current of theological and philosophical thought) was also presented between the period from the 8th century AD to the 15th century. Scholasticism sought to explain the doctrine of God and questions of faith through reason (considered through the bias of the “*imago Dei*”). The theologian Anselm of Canterbury is considered the father of scholasticism, but certainly the main theologian of scholasticism is the theologian Thomas Aquinas. His theological contribution to the “*Summa Theologica*” and the “*Summa contra Gentiles*” is crucial to theology and is a landmark in the history of Christian theology.

For Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), theology is understood as a science. The theologian presents through his masterpiece “*Proslogio*” his ontological argument to reflect on the existence of God. According to Anselm’s thought, the existence of God is self-evident. He resumes Augustine's thought and understands that it is necessary to believe in order to understand. With this, the following understanding of theology is established:

Anselm of Canterbury [...] takes up the task of Saint Augustine: faith must understand what it professes (*fides quaerens intellectum*). But it takes it further, to place itself at an intermediate point, between the partristic intelligence of faith and scholastic reason (*ratio*) (BALTHASAR, 1968 apud SESBOÛÉ; THEOBALD, 2006, p.77, our translation).

Scholasticism has the purpose of proving the data of faith through reason in order to legitimize the truth itself. According to Anselmo,

[...] for necessary reasons (*necessariis rationibus*), without appeal to Scripture, what we affirm by faith about the divine nature and its persons, outside the incarnation (*praeter incarnationem*). Disregarding Christ (*remote Christo*), as if nothing had (come) from him, (this book) proves, for necessary reasons (*rationibus necessariis*), that it is impossible for anyone to have been saved without him (CANTUÁRIA, 1987¹² apud SESBOÛÉ; THEOBALD, 2006, p.77- 78, our translation).

The context of the Middle Ages anxiety is observed when analyzing the characteristics of scholasticism. Belief in truth was going into crisis on the Middle Ages scene. For this reason, scholasticism seeks to present the truth considering reason.

¹² For more information, it recommends: ANSELMO DE CANTUÁRIA, *Lettre sur l’incarnation du Verbe VI; L’oeuvre*, t. III, éd. M. Corbin, Cerf, 1987.



The Renaissance cosmovision sought to return to classical antiquity and its principles. Thus, an anthropocentric perspective began to develop, in which reason was seen detached from the understanding of the “imago Dei”. Renaissance or humanism can be understood as a single phenomenon and emerge in the 14th century (late Middle Ages). For Tillich: “The anxiety of fate returned with the invasion of late antiquity. ‘Fortuna’ became a preferred symbol in the art of the Renaissance, [...]” (TILLICH, 1952, p.59).

Even in the Middle Ages, according to Tillich, stands out:

[...] the anxiety of fate was intensified by fear of demonic powers acting directly or through other human beings to cause illness, death, and all kinds of destruction. At the same time, fate was extended beyond death into the pre-ultimate state of purgatory and the ultimate states of hell or heaven. (TILLICH, 1952, p.59).

Looking at this figure from the artwork of the Dutch artist Hieronymus Bosch, one can highlight the anxiety mentality and spiritual crisis present in the Middle Ages:

Figure 2: The last judgment (1486-1520)¹³



Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Jheronimus_Bosch

Bosch’s work is kairotic, it presents itself at the opportune moment: the Renaissance that erupts in the Middle Ages scenario. Images about hell, the seven deadly sins, temptations, the final judgment and damnation characterize Bosch’s thinking.

¹³ Available on: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Jheronimus_Bosch Access in: 06/27/2022.



In the period of the Modern Age (between the 15th and the 18th century) the worldview of the Protestant Reformation breaks out in the 16th century on October 31, 1517, when Luther preaches the 95 theses in the cathedral of Wittenberg, Germany. Luther's act was revolutionary. This theologian, when reflecting on the situation of his time, such as: sale and purchase of indulgences, salvation through merits, tradition being understood in practice as above the Holy Scriptures, carries out a hermeneutical and theological revolution in the scenario of modernity.

[...] the anxiety of emptiness and loss of meaning appeared only twice, both remarkable occasions, however, and important for the future. One was the Renaissance, when theoretical skepticism was renewed and the question of meaning haunted some of the most sensitive minds. [...] The other was in the demonic assaults that Luther experienced, which were neither temptations in the moral sense nor moments of despair about threatening condemnation, but moments when belief in his work and message disappeared and no meaning remained. Similar experiences of the "desert" or the "night" of the soul are frequent among mystics. It must be emphasized however that in all these cases the anxiety of guilt remained predominant, and that only after the victory of humanism and Enlightenment as the religious foundation of Western society could anxiety about spiritual nonbeing become dominant. (TILLICH, 1952, p.60).

The state and government systems can also cause humanity anxiety. The economic catastrophes that erupt in capitalism and the new cybernetic or technological age are phenomena that cause mass existential anxieties and crises. Anxiety in the cybernetic age stands out as an anxiety of meaninglessness emptiness. For Tillich, "We are under the threat of spiritual nonbeing. The threats of moral and ontic nonbeing are, of course, present [...]" (TILLICH, 1952, p.61-62). The conflict of worldviews produces all-encompassing anxieties. Those who contemplate social situations, tragedies, such as the pandemic situation, wars, can be afflicted with great anxiety, as they are often just looking at them and can do nothing.

In this context of the Modern age and the cybernetic age, existentialism, in this perspective, arises in this context of spiritual anxiety present in the modern period and also in the contemporary period. Spiritual anxiety can be understood as follows: there has been a crisis of the spirit in the modern period.

The pandemic is a situation that is beyond the control of humanity and the calculation of the social system. In the face of the pandemic, one can diagnose another type of anxiety that arises: "ontological anxiety". This ontological anxiety can be defined as anxiety in the face of nothingness and being. The human being, on the brink of the possibility of acquiring a disease in a context of pandemic and panic, feels the threat of nothing. The nothingness of death and the nothingness of emptiness that pandemic isolation causes. The threat of fate and death, and the possibility of not



being able to guarantee the means of subsistence in the 21st century, put the human being in a situation of conflict between fear and the courage to be. There was the threat of escape from the meanings and sense of life. The threat of not understanding being anymore, that is, the essence of life. Where would be the basis for courage?

The pandemic has limited decision-making possibilities and limited freedom due to the public health emergency situation and the possibility of increasing the mass contagion of the Covid-19 virus. In this sense, the anxiety of fate and death encompasses the anxiety of guilt and the anxiety of the emptiness of meanings, as understood by the cultural theologian Tillich. From Cury, it can also think about the problem of anxiety in the face of the pandemic and the threat of death, certainly, anxiety increased at this time, manifesting itself in its symptoms and a disorganization of emotions, due to the most primitive fear: fear of finitude. What needs to be done in times of crisis and moments of pandemic?

Education and the family are responsible for educating about emotions and about the possibility of good and evil. Human beings, the children of humanity, need to understand their human nature so that they can manage their emotions in the face of one of humanity's destinies: finitude. The fact of humanity is life and death. The self needs to be a manager of the psyche so as not to enter into a psychic non-freedom in the face of possible threats to life and the contradictions of existence. Education about the fragility of existence needs to be more part of education, just as, if someone is taught to be strong for the future job market, it is necessary to understand what existence is and its finitude, in this way, it will be educated about the real strength: accepting existence. Just as one educates about economics and sustainability, preparing people for smart cities and sustainable economic market, one must educate about human nature, the vulnerabilities of existence, the natural destiny of humanity (death). Therefore, one must educate about existence, which I call existence education. As Cury (2013) says: the psychic planet needs management. The fact is that without an existential education, without an education of finitude, society destroys itself and there is no environmental quality. The fact of humanity is not paper money, gold, money, power and status: but life and death and beyond that, the meaning of life and death is to glorify God.

To analyze the issue of the pandemic and any situation, it must be taken into account that ontology is present in the structure of Theology. Likewise, every theory of knowledge implicitly contains ontology. "All epistemology contains an implicit ontology" (TILLICH, 2005, p.36, our



translation). For Tillich, the action of knowing participates in being, it refers, above all, to a relationship with being, in the hermeneutic bias. Thus, theology presents itself at crucial moments in history in a decidedly ontological way, when, for example, it announces about life, faith, existence and being in general.

Therefore, Tillich emphasizes the interface between Theology and Philosophy in the ontological horizon. He highlights an ontological definition of philosophy as opposed to a definition that reduces philosophy to scientific logic. An analysis of the limits of human knowledge is based on ontology, because, all epistemology has ontology.

2 - Some historical-scientific considerations about the 21st century pandemic¹⁴

The disease COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2¹⁵) causes respiratory problems in the human system and can also cause cardiological problems and chemical changes in the brain, demonstrating itself in neurological problems. It is emphasized that the first identification of the virus was in the city of Wuhan, China, in December 2019, reaching the whole world. The following figure presents an image about SARS-CoV-2 and its manifestation in an image exam:

Figure 4: SARS-CoV-2



Source: <https://star.med.br/manifestacoes-da-covid-19-em-exames-de-imagem/>

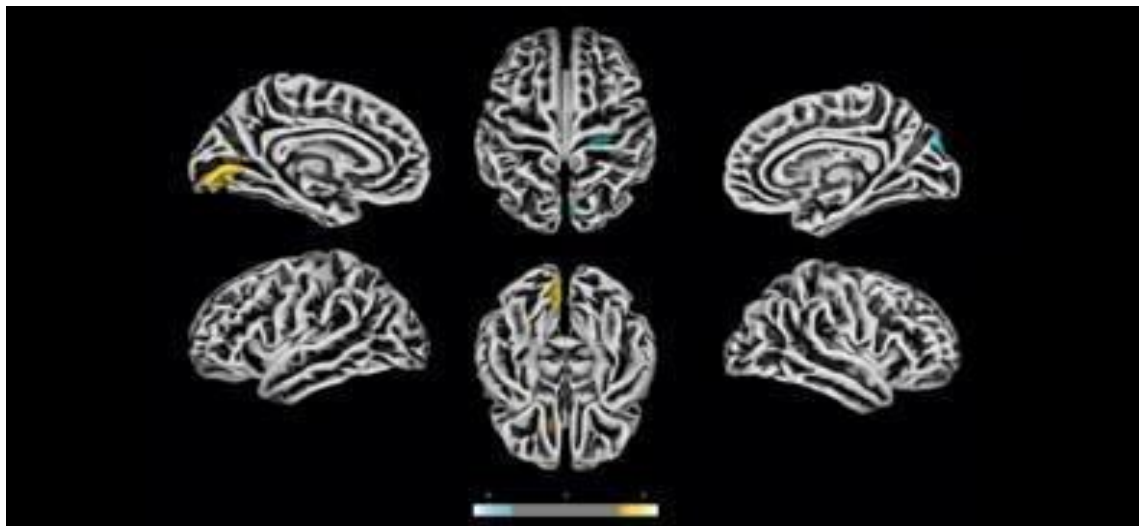
¹⁴ Thinking about the etymology of the term “pandemic” it is worth noting that: On March 11, 2020, COVID-19 was characterized by World Health Organization (WHO) as a pandemic. The term “pandemic” refers to the geographic distribution of a disease rather than its severity. The designation recognizes that there are currently outbreaks of COVID-19 in various countries and regions of the world. Available on: <https://www.paho.org/pt/covid19/historico-da-pandemia-covid-19> Access in: 06/22/22.

¹⁵ “On February 11, 2020, it was renamed SARS-CoV-2. This novel coronavirus is responsible for causing the disease COVID-19,” according to PAHO. Available on: <https://www.paho.org/pt/covid19/historico-da-pandemia-covid-19> Access in: 06/22/22.



Figure 5 highlights the image of the changes caused in the brain due to this disease:

Figure 5: Changes in the brain.



Source:

<https://agencia.fapesp.br/estudo-comprova-que-novo-coronavirus-afeta-o-cerebro-e-detalha-seus-efeitos-nas-celulas-nevrosas/34364/> (image: www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.10.09.20207464v1).

According to Toledo (2020), this image of MRI scans performed at Unicamp in 81 patients with post-COVID neuropsychiatric symptoms reveals changes in the structure of the cerebral cortex. The areas in yellow show a reduction in cortical thickness. The blue marks correspond to areas with increased thickness.

Since the beginning of the identification of the virus, researchers and organizations worldwide have sought to analyze the origin of the virus. In the context of 2020, the World Health Organization continued to work with collaborating scientists to identify the origin of the virus. According to the Butantan Institute (Instituto Butantan¹⁶), the main question for science was to seek to understand how the human population was affected by the virus. One of the questions that can be asked is how long can this virus stay in the host and will there be the possibility of mutations in the course of history?

¹⁶

Available on: <https://butantan.gov.br/covid/butantan-tira-duvida/tira-duvida-noticias/como-surgiu-o-novo-coronavirus-conheca-as-teorias-mais-acertadas-sobre-sua-origem> Access in: 06/22/22.



The scientific study in 2020 with the collaboration of many scientists sought a way to prevent reinfection with the virus and also to reduce the risks of emergence and transmission of other zoonoses, according to information from the Butantan Institute¹⁷. The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes that the origin of the pandemic is natural. It is understood that: “The most accepted thesis says that the virus passed from the bat to an intermediate mammal, and from it to the human being. Transmission from a bat directly to a human has also been suggested as a possible and probable hypothesis”¹⁸. In view of this, a way to control the spread of the virus is sought and to understand the symptoms, as well as the asymptomatic hosts, and the possible forms of contact. With a careful analysis, it also seeks to prevent other viruses of a similar dimension from spreading like the tragic event of the pandemic in the 21st century.

It is noteworthy that in December 2019 in the context of China, several cases of pneumonia were found, especially, in the city of Wuhan. Since then, it has been identified that the coronavirus has reached everywhere. It is not a common cold, but serious consequences for the human immune system are possibly diagnosed. Since the identification of COVID-19, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has been studying to find out the origin and how the host of this disease can be affected. It has also sought to provide technical support to the South American continent and all the countries of the Americas, recommending that the surveillance system be kept alert, so that patients infected with this new coronavirus can be detected, isolated and taken care of early¹⁹.

In the Brazilian scenario in 2022, the mandatory use of appropriate masks in public transport is required to prevent COVID-19 and its contagions. Given that the pandemic is a case of public health emergency.

3 - Existentialism and pandemic

Existentialism is a current of philosophical thought and can also be recognized as a worldview or cosmivision. Therefore, existentialism can be defined as the current of thought that seeks to analyze the meaning of existence and its dimension. The importance of existence is brought into vogue, especially in the 19th century, with the Danish thinker Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). This philosopher and theologian is one of the great thinkers of philosophy and

¹⁷ *Idem.*

¹⁸ *Idem.*

¹⁹ Available on: <https://www.paho.org/pt/covid19/historico-da-pandemia-covid-19> Access in: 06/24/2022.



theology, but also of psychology. The dimension of Kierkegaard's thought covers the main problems of existence and considers, above all, the interface between existence and the divine. For this reason, Kierkegaard is regarded as the father of existentialism. However, it is worth noting: the existentialism that takes place in Kierkegaard is a theistic (Christian) existentialism.

In this horizon, there are researchers who seek to delimit the emergence of existentialism from the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. But, this research considers that Nietzsche can be understood within the scope of a philosophy of life, which stands out as a philosophy of “amor fati” (love of fate). This philosophy present in Nietzsche is demonstrated in a transvaluation of all current values, including morality, whose basis would be the Judeo-Christian tradition (herd instinct).

In this sense, all morality is based on the evaluation and hierarchy of human impulses and actions. It represses the human being. It is instituted to benefit a herd. For Nietzsche, morality is the herd instinct. Thus, the Judeo-Christian tradition presents an ascetic morality. For Nietzsche, life is defined as an argument in traditional metaphysics. It represents an error in the interpretation of life, truth and the world.

But, also, in Greek antiquity, the truth was experienced in another way. However, the understanding of the truth has undergone great transformations. Therefore, one can speak of a genealogy of truth, as well as a genealogy of morality, since both – truth and morality – are intertwined in history. Ancient humanity experienced truth in light of the experience of belief in the gods. In the face of this, Nietzsche seeks to present a new morality, the moral with new values of the beyond of man, not of the herd man and resentment of ascetic morality.

For Nietzsche, the understanding of life and truth in traditional metaphysics establishes a crucial separation between man and the world. This ascetic morality of the Judeo-Christian tradition causes the denial of life and, concomitantly, the devaluation of existence, since the Christian man is a man of herd. This interpretation of the world of the Judeo-Christian tradition, according to Nietzsche, is a false interpretation:

we know that the world we inhabit is immoral, inhuman and “indivine” – for a long time we have interpreted it falsely and untruly, but according to the desire and will of our veneration, that is, according to a necessity. Because the man is a worshiping animal! But also a suspicious animal [...] The whole attitude of “man against the world”, man as a principle “denying the world”, man as the measure of things, as judge of the world, who finally puts existence itself in its balance and finds that it lacks weight – the monstrous lack of taste of this attitude came to our consciousness and disgusts us –, we already laughed, seeing “man and world” placed next to each other, separated only by the sublime



presumption of the little word “and” ! With just that laugh, however, have we not taken a step further in contempt for man? And also in pessimism, in contempt for the existence we know? (NIETZSCHE, 2001, p.239, our translation).

The German philosopher proposes to overcome the values present in society and through his philosophical path of the hammer he seeks to undertake a transformation in the world, transvaluing all values. For Nietzsche, it is the “Übermensch” (beyond-man) that can carry out this revaluation of all values. In his work “Thus Spoke Zarathustra” (1883-1885), Nietzsche emphasizes that a new type of man must emerge: “And Zarathustra spoke thus to the people: *‘I teach you the overman. Human being is something that must be overcome [...]*” (NIETZSCHE, 2006, p.5). Through this transvaluation, the beyond-man loves life in such a way that it longs for its eternal return. It is noteworthy that it loves fate (“amor fati”). “Amor fati” points to the maxim: not fear of life and its destiny, not fear of finitude and the vicissitudes of existence. For Nietzsche, the beyond-man is the one who determines values and is in a state of human elevation.

Nietzsche is a controversial and complex thinker, therefore, it is not intended in this article to present all the characteristics of his thought. Some aspects of his work are being analyzed in order to highlight the philosophy of life or philosophy of “amor fati” present in his work. Before reading Nietzsche's work, it must take into account: perspectivism. There is in his thinking the idea of perspectivism. It is about understanding that the world is full of interpretations. Perspectivism reveals itself as a method or way of thinking in Nietzsche's work. The purpose is to overcome a dogmatic and absolute understanding of the truth.

It is interesting to note that it is also from 1936 that the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) undertakes an intense reading of the work of Friedrich Nietzsche, the way in which the philosopher addresses himself to the horizon of Nietzschean philosophical thought constitutes a fundamental attitude of its own hermeneutical path. Heidegger has as a striking feature of his thinking: the openness to rethink concepts, to create new philosophical questions and even the intention to overcome traditional philosophical thoughts.

It is important to emphasize that in the same year of writing “The origin of the work of art” (1936), Heidegger presents his course on “Nietzsche I”. He interprets Nietzschean philosophy establishing a relationship with the structure of the great metaphysical tradition. He assumes in his thought that the eternal return of the same is the high point of Nietzsche's thought. The relevance of Nietzsche's philosophy is considered by Heidegger, in this sense, it is highlighted: “Nietzsche's



position, in the tradition of Western thought, is represented by his doctrine of the eternal return” (HEIDEGGER, 1961, p.23, our translation).

In this sense, Heidegger also identifies in Nietzsche's philosophy a relationship with truth, especially with regard to the doctrine of the eternal return. Thus, he registers his impression as follows: “what we are looking for is the internal structure of truth inherent in the eternal return of the same, as it is the fundamental thought of Nietzschean philosophy” (HEIDEGGER, 1961, p.431, our translation). And, soon after, Heidegger categorically concludes: “The truth of this thought concerns beings in their totality (*das Seiende im Ganzen*)”. (HEIDEGGER, 1961, p.431, our translation).

Heidegger understands that Nietzsche's philosophy not only brings about a closure of Western thought, but also seeks to overcome it (“Überwindung”)²⁰. Insofar as, for Heidegger, metaphysics is, in its essence, nihilism; insofar as the will to power would enunciate the fundamental principle of metaphysics in the era of its completion under the sign of the planetary domination of technique, then the metaphysics of the will to power would also be the most adequate way and preparation for overcoming nihilism together with the end of philosophy, when it then opens the task of thought.

At one point, Heidegger states: “*The essence of nihilism is the history in which nothing else remains of being as such*” (HEIDEGGER, 1961, p.201, our translation). The central question that moved the reflections of the philosopher Heidegger: the question of being, directed his thinking to the situation of forgetfulness of Being in his time²¹. In this way, Nietzsche would not represent the rupture with tradition, but would only be the extension of metaphysics, taking it to its end by revealing its essence.

Both philosophers were primarily concerned with metaphysics. All Nietzsche's critique, ultimately, is the critique of his metaphysics of time. Heidegger, likewise, has metaphysics as the

²⁰ Heidegger, influenced by contacts with Nietzsche's criticism of Platonism and Christianity and with Kierkegaard's polemic with the reflexive philosophy of speculative idealism, shaped a very original way of overcoming Metaphysics. The philosopher became convinced that, until his time, the entire history of ontology was nothing more than a theology and that, with the neo-Kantians, it had fallen into a theory of knowledge. Metaphysics was this history of ontology as onto-theo-logy. Heidegger proposed a fundamental ontology that, through an existential analytics, would prepare a way of posing the question of being. (Cf. HEIDEGGER, Martin. “Heidegger – Vida e Obra”. In. *Conferências e escritos filosóficos*. Tradução Ernildo Stein. São Paulo: Nova Cultural Ltda, 1999, pp. 17-18).

²¹ The overcoming of Metaphysics will show that being is veiled in beings and that man tends to forget this veiling. It is important to think about being as always veiling itself and not properly exposing it to the light of objectification, which would be to confuse it with beings. (Cf. HEIDEGGER, Martin. “Heidegger – Vida e Obra”. In. *Conferências e escritos filosóficos*. Tradução Ernildo Stein. São Paulo: Nova Cultural Ltda, 1999, p.18).



focal theme of his philosophy. Paradoxically, both thinkers claimed that metaphysics was dead; Heidegger wanted to found a new understanding, but on other grounds.

In *Essays and Conferences* (1954), Heidegger states: “The overcoming of metaphysics is thought of in the dimension of the history of being. It foreshadows the original support of the oblivion of being” (HEIDEGGER, 2012, p.68, our translation).

Heidegger also points out:

Speaking of overcoming metaphysics can also mean that "metaphysics" remains the name of Platonism that, in the modern world, is exposed in the interpretations of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The reversal of Platonism, in the sense given by Nietzsche, that the sensible becomes the true world and the supersensible the untrue, stubbornly remains within metaphysics. This kind of overcoming metaphysics, which Nietzsche has in view and in the very sense of nineteenth-century positivism, despite a higher transformation, is nothing more than a definitive engagement with metaphysics. It seems, in fact, that here the "goal", the transcendence towards the supersensible, is marginalized in favor of a firm permanence in the elementary of sensibility. In the meantime, however, nothing else is done than finishing the oblivion of being, freeing and occupying the supersensible as the will to power. (HEIDEGGER, 2012, p.68-69, our translation).

It appears that both Heidegger and Nietzsche observe the crucial question before the philosophical tradition: the opening to the task of thought. Thus, under the premises of rethinking philosophy and the task of creating from philosophy, the hammer philosopher, Nietzsche, and the thinker Heidegger, seek in their hermeneutical reserves to break with philosophical traditions and assume the task of thinking, which is placed before the philosopher whenever it opens itself up when creating.

The fact is that Nietzsche seeks to overcome a worldview that has truth as absolute. In his work “Theoretical Introduction to Truth and Lies in the Extramoral Sense”, Nietzsche presents the search for overcoming dogmatic truth:

[...] an incessant multiplicity of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms, in short, a sum of human relationships that have been poetically and rhetorically elevated, transposed, ornamented, and which, after long use, seem to a people firm, regular. and embarrassing: truths are illusions whose origin is forgotten, metaphors that have been used and that have lost their sensible force [...]. (NIETZSCHE, 2005, p.69, our translation).

Thus, the truth is not seen in the light of traditional metaphysics. Later, especially in “*The Gay Science*” (1882), in “*Beyond good and evil*” (1886) and in “*On the Genealogy of Morality*” (1887), the truth is understood from the perspective of perspectivism in thought from Nietzsche. This German thinker seeks to recover Greek antiquity, especially the pre-Socratic philosophical



dimension in order to develop a philosophy of the hammer that seeks to destroy the values of the Western worldview.

When reflecting on the purpose of science, Nietzsche points out:

As? Is the ultimate aim of science to give man as much pleasure and as little displeasure as possible? And if pleasure and displeasure are so intertwined that whoever wants the most of one must also have the maximum of the other – that whoever wants to learn to “rejoice to heaven” must also prepare himself to “be grieved to death”? (2001, p.63, our translation).

Nietzsche elaborates his interpretation on the basis of paradox (in contraries). Then, science can promote both pain and joy.

Perhaps it is now better known for its power to take away from man his joys and make him colder [...] But it could still prove to be the great cause of pain! – And then perhaps its contrary power would also be revealed, its tremendous capacity to make new galaxies of joy shine (2001, p.63-64, our translation).

Science knows very little, although it grows, since its basis is metaphysics. In the ruins of traditional metaphysics, science itself is also destroyed. A new science must emerge with a new consciousness. Science must be beyond good and evil. Thus, the interpretation in Nietzsche is based on a dialectical bias of opposites: the beyond-man is the one who sees evil as an element to make it stronger. In this also consists the “amor fati”. Therefore, the question of the gay science is: “Each epoch can give rise to a choice: 'either suppress their venerations or – themselves!'. This would be nihilism; but wouldn't that also be – nihilism? Here is our question”. (NIETZSCHE, 2001, p.240, our translation). Therefore, when dogmatic truth collapsed in the modern period, their beliefs also collapsed, and with that, there was the “death of the gods”. Hopelessness settled in the world and nothingness. There was no longer a belief in an absolute truth. But, nihilism.

The fact is that nihilism comes from naturalism itself, since the naturalism that is consolidated with the work “On the Origin of Species” (1859) by Charles Darwin, understands that the origin of nature is nature itself and not “God”. There is no transcendence and no afterlife for naturalism. The naturalist worldview understands that nature gave rise to everything and that human life is a complex machine that has a determined end. Therefore, for naturalism there is no life after death and there is no belief in the divine and the transcendental.

In this way, naturalism does not answer the fundamental questions of existence, causing a devaluation of existence itself when understanding it as a machine. Naturalism gave rise to



nihilism. This nihilism that erupted in the 19th century devalues existence and does not believe in any truth, not even in the divine. Nihilism is the valorization of nothingness. It emphasizes disbelief in absolute truth. For this reason, Nietzsche is not understood as a representative of existentialism, but as a complex thinker who presents nihilistic characteristics and who has the purpose of demolishing the values of traditional metaphysics, presenting new values and a new ideal that necessarily requires a new type of man: the “Übermensch”, a new type of philosophy, the philosophy of “amor fati”, as well, requires a new type of science: the science beyond good and evil.

Emphasizing the work “The gay science” is presented this new ideal:

Another ideal runs before us, a prodigious, tempting ideal, full of dangers, which no one would like to lead to believe, because no one can so easily recognize the right to it: the ideal of a spirit that naively, that is, without having willed, and by overflowing abundance and potency, plays with everything that has been called holy, good, untouchable, divine; for which the highest, that in which the people naturally find their measure of value. (NIETZSCHE, 2001, p.259, our translation).

Ontologically analyzing Nietzsche's thought, Tillich emphasizes the basis of the philosophy of life present in Nietzsche:

Nietzsche's will to power unites both terms and must be understood in the light of their ontological meaning. One could say paradoxically that Nietzsche's will to power is neither will nor power, that is, is neither will in the psychological sense nor power in the sociological sense. It designates the self-affirmation of life as life, including self-preservation and growth. Therefore the will does not strive for something it does not have, for some object outside itself, but wills itself in the double sense of preserving and transcending itself. This is its power, and also its power over itself. Will to power is the self-affirmation of the will as ultimate reality. (TILLICH, 1952, p.26-27).

In Nietzsche, the will to power is highlighted as one of the main concepts of his philosophy of life. The beyond-man presents the will to power. According to Tillich:

Nietzsche is the most impressive and effective representative of what could be called a "philosophy of life." Life in this term is the process in which the power of being actualizes itself. But in actualizing itself it overcomes that in life which, although belonging to life, negates life. (TILLICH, 1952, p.27).

Analyzing Nietzsche's concepts ontologically, Tillich presents his ontology of courage. He, especially, considers Nietzsche's “The Will to Power”. It is important to note that for Tillich:

Courage is the power of life to affirm itself in spite of this ambiguity, while the negation of life because of its negativity is an expression of cowardice. On this basis Nietzsche develops a prophecy and philosophy of courage in opposition to the mediocrity and decadence of life in the period whose coming he saw. (1952, p.27-28).



Courage has an ontological character for Tillich. For Tillich: “Ontology speaks analogously. Being as being transcends objectivity as well as subjectivity”. (1952, p.25). Thus, seeking to elaborate an ontology of the courage to be, Tillich delimits the importance of taking concepts in their ontological sense. About the origin of the concept of courage:

In agreement with the stipulation of the Terry Foundation that the lectures shall be concerned with ‘religion in the light of science and philosophy’ I have chosen a concept in which theological, sociological, and philosophical problems converge, the concept of ‘courage’. Few concepts are as useful for the analysis of the human situation. Courage is an ethical reality, but it is rooted in the whole breadth of human existence and ultimately in the structure of being itself. It must be considered ontologically in order to be understood ethically. (TILLICH, 1952, p.1).

The true essence of courage is faith in God. The question of courage permeates all existence and reality. Courage has an essentially ethical basis, but beyond that, courage permeates all areas of life. The definition of courage contributes to understanding the very definition of existence. According to Tillich: “The ethical question of the nature of courage leads inescapably to the ontological question of the nature of being” (TILLICH, 1952, p.2). Courage has two crucial meanings: the ethical and the ontological. Reflecting on history, it can be observed that the courage to be imposes itself in the face of crucial moments, such as the pandemic situation.

According to Tillich:

Courage as a human act, as a matter of valuation, is an ethical concept. Courage as the universal and essential self-affirmation of one's being is an ontological concept. The courage to be is the ethical act in which man affirms his own being in spite of those elements of his ex-istence which conflict with his essential self-affirmation. (TILLICH, 1952, p.3).

In Nietzsche, the courage to be is demonstrated in the warrior, the beyond-man is a warrior, it presents “amor fati” in its essence. Such “amor fati” stands out as a self-affirmation of life. But, it is not a self-affirmation of life that seeks to be spared. Self-affirmation is a virtue. For Tillich, courage in Nietzsche stands out in dialogue with self-affirmation in the following way: “Self-affirmation is the affirmation of life and death that belongs to life” (TILLICH, 1952, p.25). Courage must always be overcoming itself, that is living. The highest self-affirmation is the will to power, it is therefore the love of destiny.

Given this, it can reflect on the dimension of the courage to be in the light of a Christian perspective. The courage to be happens through communion with God, that is, through faith in



God. As all questions must be analyzed ontologically, also theological questions are considered in Tillich under the ontological bias. In this sense, the understanding of the concept of faith in Tillich has an ontological sense:

Faith is the state of being grasped by the power of being-itself. The courage to be is an expression of faith and what "faith" means must be understood through the courage to be. We have defined courage as the self-affirmation of being in spite of nonbeing. (TILLICH, 1952, p.172).

Faith is the experience of the courage to be as potency. Thus, faith is demonstrated in life in all its potency despite the threats to being, therefore, despite the pandemic situation. That is why Tillich's theology can also be defined as a theology of courage in the face of non-being. Theology is faced with the paradox of existence itself: non-existence. Reflecting on the dimension of faith shows that the human being is accepted by God in communion with Him. Therefore, faith: "[...] is the existential acceptance of something transcending ordinary experience." (TILLICH, 1952, p. 173). Faith is being empowered by God. Thus, the human being, essentially, affirms itself through faith. It is faith that proves to be the foundation of the courage to be.

For Tillich this understanding of faith and the courage to be is of paramount importance in the modern age: "This is decisive for a period in which, as in our own, the anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness is dominant. Certainly the anxiety of fate and death is not lacking in our time". (TILLICH, 1952, p.173).

In the modern period and in the period of the cyber age it is the anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness that is predominant, accompanied by the other types of anxiety in lower degrees. Some worldviews stand out in the cyber age, such as: the naturalist worldview, the nihilistic worldview, the existentialist worldview and the Christian worldview. However, the naturalistic worldview is still the prevailing worldview. It is necessary that the Christian cosmovision seek to transpose the ecclesiastical precincts to exercise the mission of theology on earth. Considering that the naturalist cosmovision contributed to doubts about the meaning of existence and even to the loss of understanding of the meaning of the dimension of existence and life in its ambiguity. Therefore, nihilism demonstrates itself as the total negation of existence and of everything. Nihilism, then, enshrines the loss of the meaning of existence.

In view of this, the existentialist worldview, especially in the 20th century, seeks to emphasize the meaning of existence, pointing out that existence has value. But what about the Christian worldview? The challenges facing the Christian worldview are many, among them is the



situation of the pandemic in the 21st century. It is necessary that the Christian worldview increasingly exercise its apologetic role and speak more and more about this situation of suffering outside ecclesiastical precincts, announcing the Gospel of the Kingdom of God for the whole earth. The Christian worldview has the challenge of overcoming the anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness that is also present in the 21st century.

For Tillich the problem is: “If, however, doubt and meaninglessness prevail one experiences an abyss in which the meaning of life and the truth of ultimate responsibility disappear” (1952, p.174). Tillich analyzing types of anxiety and history poses a fundamental question for our era: “The question then is this: Is there a courage which can conquer the anxiety of meaninglessness and doubt? Or in other words, can the faith which accepts acceptance resist the power of nonbeing in its most radical form? Can faith resist meaninglessness?” (TILLICH, 1952, p.174).

The situation of the pandemic reflects from Tillich's work something fundamental that stands as a challenge of this era for the Christian worldview:

He who is in the grip of doubt and meaninglessness cannot liberate himself from this grip; but he asks for an answer which is valid within and not outside the situation of his despair. He asks for the ultimate foundation of what we have called the ‘courage of despair’. (TILLICH, 1952, p.175).

Courage is not ascetic. Thinking beyond Tillich, it can be said that courage is in the earth, for the earth and beyond the earth. For courage in the Christian worldview is essentially eschatological. Courage must accept situations of despair, because, it is based on faith. The pandemic can be understood as one of the examples of a radical manifestation of non-being. In this way, the abyss of the anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness is overcome in absolute faith in the Unconditioned. According to Tillich, absolute faith is a different faith: “This faith transcends both the mystical experience and the divine-human encounter”. (TILLICH, 1952, p.177).

Only through this faith that is the basis of the courage to be, there is the self-affirmation of life that overcomes all forms of denial. Since non-being cannot prevail over life. For Tillich: “The divine self-affirmation is the power that makes the self-affirmation of the finite being, the courage to be, possible” (1952, p.180-181). It is through absolute faith that it can overcome denial and the threats to being caused also by the anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness.

The pandemic, for example, can cause generalized anxiety and general despair, which in fact has been observed to occur. But this tragic situation also raised the question of the meaning of



science, life, existence and religion. The meaning has been called into question or has been taken over by desperation from the threat of the pandemic. In this sense, it is worth emphasizing Tillich's theological search in his ontology of the courage to overcome a traditional theistic perspective. The source of the courage to be and of absolute faith, even, is in “God above God” of traditional theism, above the concept of God that is presented in political rhetoric. In Tillich's words: “The courage to be which is rooted in the experience of the God above the God” (TILLICH, 1952, p.187). Thus, “God above God” is the source of the courage to be. Therefore, the theologian seeks to overcome traditional theism. Only in this way can the anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness be incorporated into life and eventually overcome.

According to Tillich:

Biblical religion as well as Protestant theology are aware of the paradoxical character of this encounter. They are aware that if God encounters man God is neither object nor subject and is therefore above the scheme into which theism has forced him. [...] The courage to be which is rooted in the experience of the God above the God of theism unites and transcends the courage to be as a part and the courage to be as oneself. It avoids both the loss of oneself by participation and the loss of one's world by individualization. The acceptance of the God above the God of theism makes us a part of that which is not also a part but is the ground of the whole. (TILLICH, 1952, p.187).

God above the God of traditional theism is the God who suffered on the cross and who suffers together with the sufferer. The “crucified God” understands the sufferings of human beings and helps them. Absolute faith is in the crucified God.

This research also examines the question of existentialism in the light of Kierkegaard, it can be highlighted that the work of this great thinker presents itself as a project on existence. In order to understand the meaning of existence in Kierkegaard's trajectory of thought, it is necessary to consider the epistemological and ontological horizon in which his work is situated: there is an interface between Literature, Philosophy and Psychology. In this sense, Kierkegaard develops a Christian existentialism considering the literary, philosophical and psychological interface. However, he does not guide by Christian dogmatics, but has the purpose of reflecting on the structure of existence and the meaning of the human existential dimension.

It is worth mentioning the literary aspect in Kierkegaard's thought, an artistic aspect that is used by this theologian to think about what existence is and how existence takes place. He uses indirect communication in his philosophy, standing out for his use of pseudonyms. The pseudonyms themselves already lead to thinking about the dimension of existence. In this research, the question of existence will be highlighted from the work “The concept of anguish” (1844). In



this literary context, anguish refers to the aspect of the interiority of existence. Kierkegaard analyzes about anguish from "Adam", in which the issue of freedom and the capacity to sin that belongs to the human race and to the individual is highlighted. In Adam, as a prototype of the human being, the possibility of man's free action stands out originally.

In the literary composition of the work, for example, anguish is presented as a presupposition of hereditary sin from Adam. In order to define the concept of anguish in paragraph 5 of the writing, first, Kierkegaard addresses the historical issues of sin and then highlights in §2 The concept of "the first sin", §3 The concept of innocence and § 4 The concept of fall. The question of sin is fundamental to understand what anguish is as inherent to existence. In this context, in paragraph 6 of the article, Kierkegaard reflects on anguish as a presupposition of hereditary sin within the scope of the progression of hereditary sin.

The human being presents in his structure the anguish, which is part of his own being. But he needs to learn to agonize in order to understand the very meaning of existence and finitude. According to Kierkegaard:

Instead, I want to say that this is an adventure that everyone has to go through: that of learning to anguish, so that they don't get lost, either because they have never been in anguish or sink into anguish; therefore, it who has learned to anguish correctly has learned what is highest (KIERKEGAARD, 1968, p.187, our translation).

It is based on the conception of sin and anguish, having a retrospective look at Adam and the work of Genesis of the Holy Scriptures, that the Danish philosopher develops the understanding of existence. Kierkegaard understands the human being as a synthesis: "Since it is a synthesis, it can be distressed, and the more deeply it is distressed, the greater the human being" (KIERKEGAARD, 1968, p.187, our translation). Thus, only the human being is distressed. Anguish is also an action inherent to the human being. It produces anguish, that is, it develops it in existence.

In this writing "The concept of anguish" the pseudonym stands out: "Vigilius Haufniensis" (watchful sentinel). Kierkegaard's literary style has an ontological purpose that points to the vicissitudes of existence. A dialectic between the individual and the human race is developed from the analysis of the concept of sin in Adam and how sin can arise. According to Kierkegaard: "The essentials of human existence; that man is individuum and, as such, at the same time himself and



the entire human race, so that humanity participates entirely in the individual, and the individual participates in the entire human race”. (1968, p.33, our translation).

Sin arises from Adam’s existential decision to disobey God’s command not to partake of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. With this decision to sin, evil enters the world and all its possibilities and consequences are brought into focus. The decision taken by Adam was taken by the human race, since Adam represents not only himself, but the entire human race, all humanity. Sickness enters the world and the possibilities of evil are emphasized, because, of the original sin that took place in the garden of Eden.

Existence in its dimension is highlighted in the individual and in the whole human race, simultaneously. Existing decisions have repercussions on the history of humanity. What Adam did represents a leap, a leap into disobedience. The synthesis of the human being highlights the paradox as a historical movement. Thus, it is worth mentioning that one of the fundamental concepts in Kierkegaard is the concept of totality to explain the relationship between the individual and the history of humanity. The human being participates in totality. From these considerations it can be understood that the suffering of an individual can participate in the totality. Therefore, in times of great world crisis, such as: wars, tragedies, and, specifically, the pandemic situation, the entire human race was directly or indirectly affected by what happened to an individual to a lesser or greater degree.

For Kierkegaard, anguish is prior to sin and sinfulness, therefore, is prior to the very history of the human race and the entry of evil into the world. The human being is a being of anguish in its essence. In Kierkegaard’s words: “anxiety is the reality of freedom as possibility before possibility” (1968, p.49, our translation).

For this reason, this research highlights the thinker Kierkegaard as the precursor of existentialism in the modern age. Tillich thinks that the Kierkegaard’s thought influenced a philosophy of existence. According to Tillich:

When Kierkegaard broke away from Hegel's system of essences he did two things: he proclaimed an existential attitude and he instigated a philosophy of existence. He realized that the knowledge of that which concerns us infinitely is possible only in an attitude of infinite concern, in an existential attitude. At the same time he developed a doctrine of man which describes the estrangement of man from his essential nature in terms of anxiety and despair. Man in the existential situation of finitude and estrangement can reach truth only in an existential attitude. [...] His cognitive function is as existentially conditioned as his whole being. (TILLICH, 1952, p.125-126).



Even Kierkegaard presents the understanding of existence in important dimension, it is Nietzsche who has influenced the modern existentialism in both aspects: Christian and atheistic. According to Tillich:

There is probably nobody who has influenced modern Existentialism as much as Nietzsche and there is probably nobody who has presented the will to be oneself more consistently and more absurdly. In him the feeling of meaninglessness became despairing and self-destructive. On this basis Existentialism, that is the great art, literature, and philosophy of the 20th century, reveal the courage to face things as they are and to express the anxiety of meaninglessness. It is creative courage which appears in the creative expressions of despair. Sartre calls one of his most powerful plays *No Exit*, a classical formula for the situation of despair. But he himself has an exit: he can say "no exit," thus taking the situation of meaninglessness upon himself. (TILLICH, 1952, p.143).

For existentialism, there is no exit, the human being is condemned to existence and finitude. Condemned to freedom. It must face the vulnerabilities of existence and the responsibility of freedom and finitude.

Martin Heidegger, in his masterpiece "Being and Time" (1927), emphasizes that the human being is being-towards-death. According to Heidegger: Dasein as Being-towards-the-end is a phenomenon. In this sense: "Dasein is dying as long as it exists [...]" (HEIDEGGER, 1962, p.295). The human being as "Dasein" (being-there) is a being thrown into the world, therefore, a being thrown into its most extreme possibility: death. Thus, it is essentially a being of finitude. In this way, as a mortal being in its essence, the human being needs to understand and accept its own finitude, this is characterized as authentic existence. In authentic existence, "Dasein" understands itself as a being-towards-death and accepts its structure. In this sense, authentic existence is based on understanding and authentic care. It is about accepting oneself and the most extreme possibility of existence, as well as understanding that the human being is a being of possibilities. Through authentic existence, Dasein essentially relates to others. But, in the case of inauthenticity, the human being is in the inauthentic mode, permeated by gossip, without foundation, in the scope of objectification and non-essential language. According to Heidegger:

"Dasein exists, in each case, as authentically or inauthentically historical. It becomes plain that Dasein's inauthentic historicity lies in that which-under the title of "everydayness"-we have looked upon, in the existential analytic of Dasein, as the horizon that is closest to us". (HEIDEGGER, 1962, p.428).

Because, Dasein is only the entity which exists historically, it is being-towards-death. Dasein is history in its essence. It goes to the proper destiny, the end. Heidegger explains the



essence of Dasein like history from the concept of “Geschichte”. He did not use the term “Historie”. Both German terms: “Geschichte” and “Historie” mean history, however, he prefers the term “Geschichte”, because, it indicates the meaning of Dasein as history essentially. As history, Dasein is in the horizon of “geschehen”, it happens in the world, it beings in the world. It is important to highlight that Heidegger understands Dasein as historical in the sense of the happening. Dasein is, thus, historically.

Heidegger points out the history not from of historiology and science, because he understands that life and death, the entire existence cannot be understood by science and technique. In Heidegger’s words: “*In analysing the historicity of Dasein we shall try to show that this entity is not 'temporal' because it 'stands in history', but that, on the contrary, it exists historical and can so exist only because it is temporal in the very basis of its Being*”. (HEIDEGGER, 1962, p.428).

Therefore, it did not understand itself as a project. It is noteworthy that Heidegger does not consider himself an existentialist, but, it can be recognized as the thinker of existence and “Being”. The main question of philosophy for Heidegger is the question of the “meaning of Being” or “question of Being” (*Seinsfrage*). Thought must establish the primordial question of history: the question of the truth of Being. Only the “Dasein” that is essentially being-towards-death can establish the question of truth. According to Heidegger, “Dasein” is the only being that can ask for the truth and establish questions about existence and history, as well as about itself, because only the human being is a being of language, a hermeneutic being and finitude, which can understand itself and that the human being dies.

In this sense, for Heidegger:

Care is Being-towards-death. We have defined "anticipatory resoluteness" as authentic Being towards the possibility which we have characterized as Dasein's utter impossibility. In such Being-towards-its-end, Dasein exists in a way which is authentically whole as that entity which it can be when 'thrown into death'. This entity does not have an end at which it just stops, but it exists finitely. ³ The authentic future is temporalized primarily by that temporality which makes up the meaning of anticipatory resoluteness; it thus reveals itself as finite. (HEIDEGGER, 1962, p.378).

The care (*Sorge*) is the essence of Dasein. Care is as existential ground of Dasein.

We have defined Dasein's Being as "care". The ontological meaning of "care" is temporality. We have shown that temporality constitutes the disclosedness of the "there", and we- have shown how it does so. In the disclosedness of the "there" the world is disclosed along with it. The unity of significance-that is, the ontological constitution of the world must then likewise be grounded in temporality. The existential-temporal condition for the possibility of the world lies in the fact that temporality, as an ecstatic unity, has something like a horizon. (HEIDEGGER, 1962, p.416).



Heidegger defines that Dasein presents an existential unit (care, which Heidegger uses from the term “Sorge”) that demonstrates its meaning with entities. There are two modes of care: “Besorgen” (occupation) which refers to Dasein’s relationship with other entities in the way of objectification and in relation to entities that have Dasein’s way of being, it is about solicitude (“Fürsorge”). Authentic care is care for the in-between, that is, care for life and the understanding of being finite. The truth of beings is manifested in the authentic care way of being. Dasein as care demonstrates that it is together with other entities, what happens with Dasein has repercussions on the world, as each Dasein participates in the unity.

From Heidegger, it can highlight the pandemic cannot be understood from of occupation. Because this mode of care is not in essentially way, but it characterizes Dasein in so far as it involves with paraphernalia. Human being is concerned with the objects, like maker and the job. It is not seeing the entities as they are. In this sense, this mode of care cannot understand the pandemic and the other entities involved in this situation as they are. It is only dealing with tasks and projects in everydayness. Since Dasein is history, the pandemic can be understood in the context of “world-history” (“Weltgeschichte”), which means the pandemic is a worldly event that is caught up in Dasein’s happening. But, there is the mode of care as solicitude (Fürsorge): the care about others. The meaning is “caring for”. For Heidegger:

But those entities towards which Dasein as Being-with comports itself do not have the kind of Being which belongs to equipment ready-to-hand; they are themselves Dasein. These entities are not objects of concern, but rather of solicitude. (HEIDEGGER, 1962, p.157).

Heidegger emphasizes in “Being and Time” a preparation to carry out the primordial question of philosophy: the question of the truth of being, emphasizing that throughout the history of Western philosophy, the truth of being is forgotten. One does not ask about the truth of being, the primordial question of philosophy has been forgotten. One only seeks to understand the entity of the entity. Modern science, for example, only seeks to understand the entity of entities, property of entities and does not ask about the truth of Being. In this sense, due to the forgetfulness of Being, “Dasein” does not ask for the truth of Being and, thus, cannot essentially understand the Being, entities, or itself.

By forgetting Being, “Dasein” forgets meaning, truth and itself. In the forgetfulness of Being, “Dasein” forgets that it is essentially a being of language, a hermeneutic being and a



questioning being. In this way, it no longer asks essentially about its existence and about other beings. It is in an abyss without understanding and meaning.

It is important to emphasize that in “Being and time”, Heidegger seeks to present the question of Being, having “Dasein” as a starting point. Thus, he presents an ontology of “Dasein” that seeks to repeat the fundamental question of history: the question of Being and, thus, to emphasize the very meaning of existence. What characterizes the facticity is the “Dasein” is launched in the world. Dasein exists and is a being of possibilities, whose most extreme possibility is death. For Heidegger: “Thrownness and that Being towards death in which one either flees it or anticipates it, form a unity; and in this unity birth and death are 'connected' in a manner characteristic of Dasein. As care, Dasein is the 'between” (HEIDEGGER, 1962, p.426-427). Dasein is between, because, it is movement. But it is not the movement according to the physics and biological sense, however, the concept of movement is understood by the concept of history. Since Dasein is temporality, it is history as well. In this sense, for Heidegger care means:

The question of Dasein's 'connectedness' is the ontological problem of Dasein's historizing. To lay bare the structure of historizing, and the existential-temporal conditions of its possibility, signifies that one has achieved an ontological understanding of historicity. (HEIDEGGER, 1962, p.427).

Human being is not only an object of science. It is beyond. Modern science is limited to understand the entire dimension of existence. Thus, in the view of ontology of Dasein, Heidegger points out the ontic and ontological perspective to understand the existence. The existence is “being-there”, which means “Dasein” exists as care, it is essentially temporality and history. The other entities can be understood and analyzed from Dasein as genuine care and historicity. Life and death are not objects for historiology, but, the connectedness only can be understood from of ontology of Dasein.

Heidegger highlights: “While Dasein can indeed be brought authentically face to face with its thrownness, so as to understand itself in that thrownness authentically [...]”. (1962, p.399). From that, it can observe that authentic care is concerned with beings as a whole and, in this sense, demonstrates that Dasein understands itself, therefore, it understands that it is face to face with its possibilities.

Therefore, from the consideration of some thinkers on this topic, such as Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and Heidegger, it can observe some characteristics of the dimension of existence in



the face of reality, the question of evil and suffering. In this way, it sought to reflect on existence, its way of facing reality, the structure of existence and the origin of evil, as well as the question of existence and death, as inherent to the very structure of the human being. It is concluded from these considerations that the role of philosophy, existentialism and ontology is to highlight the structure of existence and the role of existence in the face of vulnerabilities and possibilities of existing. Since the human being is a being-towards-death, it must understand itself as finite and seek to exist at its maximum as a being of possibilities.

4 - Biblical passages and pandemic

Analyzing the issue of suffering and the action of suffering in the light of the Bible, some biblical passages stand out: “Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you’”²². (Luke 10:9). As highlighted in the biblical passage of 1 Timothy 5:23: “Stop drinking only water and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses”²³, the Christian can suffer from infirmities. This is because of the sin that entered the world.

It can also be noted that pandemics are shown as signs of the end of times. Observing Matthew 24:4-8²⁴:

4 Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. 6 You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these are the beginning of birth pains.

These things are the beginning of pain. Jesus had already warned in his earthly ministry that there would be rumors of wars, wars, dissensions, nation against nation, misery and pestilence in various places on earth. This must occur, but it is not the end yet, they are just signs of the end, signaling that soon the kingdom of God will be fully installed on earth. Because of the sin that has entered the world, all are sinners and fall short of the glory of God. With sin, evil also entered in all its possibilities, sickness and death in the world. With this, the human being can come to suffer, but

²² Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Available on: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2010%3A9&version=NIV> Access in: 08/02/2022.

²³ Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Available on: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Timothy+5%3A23&version=NIV> Access in: 08/02/2022.

²⁴ Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Available on: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+24%3A4-8&version=NIV> Access in: 08/02/2022.



it will only be saved, having eternal life through the acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only and sufficient savior, confessing the Lord Jesus Christ before all and confessing its sins and regretting these.

By accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as the only and sufficient savior, the human being cannot avoid the possibility of suffering or physical death, but it will always have the help of God and according to His holy and sovereign will it is freed and protected against evil. Furthermore, it will not have spiritual death, but it will be forever with God worshipping Him eternally in the kingdom of God.

5 - Final considerations

Some crucial points are presented in this research:

1) Theology is a science, therefore, it is theoretical and practical. It is a human science that is concerned with presenting the Word of God and God's self-revelation in history present in the Holy Scriptures and in nature; 2) There is no theology without praxis (practice), so it is necessarily apologetic and therefore public. Thus, theology must also be the theology of the pandemic, because it has the mission of responding from the Word of God to the problems of existence and the world; 3) The theologian has a public mission. Theology is neither sport nor fiction, it is a public and social mission; 4) The problem of evil and theodicies theologically come from the voluntary decision in the original fall. The human being can overcome evil and transform the world by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as the only and sufficient Savior and confessing him before the world, because Jesus, the Christ, conquered evil, conquered the double death: spiritual and physical, resurrecting on the third day of death on the cross and with the body glorified, in himself is fulfilled the promise that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life with a glorified body **without spiritual and physical death, and, therefore, without infirmities and corruptions in the kingdom of God**; 5) Theology is ontological in its essence. It has the task of asking about the essence of the Word of God and responding to the world, announcing the Word of God; and 6) Theology needs biblical hermeneutics for the in-depth study of the Word of God, in order to carry out hermeneutics, exegesis and the presentation of the Word of God in the form of a sermon or teaching before the contemporary world. The analyzes sought to be carried out from an ontological perspective in dialogue with a theological bias.



Thus, this sought to highlight through a path of dialogue an analysis of the existence and the pandemic from some theological and philosophical considerations, especially, it was considered the theological understanding of Tillich and the philosophical understanding of Heidegger. From some thinkers presented in this research, it can understand: 1) the suffering of an individual can participate in the totality; 2) the evil enters in the world from the decision of Adam in the garden of Eden; 3) the human being can overcome the suffering by faith in God, in the salvation from Jesus Christ; 4) the human being must have the courage to be in the world, in the existence and in face of the finitude and 5) the human being must understand that the existence is finitude. Therefore, the purpose was to present some aspects of the question of existence and the pandemic in this research. For those who read my research can observe that I have been writing my research on theology, philosophy and law always considering the works of art in order to highlight the situation and the understanding from theology and philosophy about the dimension of existence and reality.



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